January 19, 2021

Dear loved ones of residents at Minoru Residence,

Thank you to everyone who joined our Virtual Family Town Hall last night. We had a great turnout, with over 165 people joining and we remain committed to providing you with regular communication and updates about the outbreak at Minoru Residence.

We recognize that these outbreak restrictions are difficult for you, your families and your loved ones. And we want to do everything we can to help everyone through this difficult time. We know that there have been many requests from families to drop off packaged food, treats and snacks for the residents. We are still consulting with our Medical Health Officer as well as Infection Control and Prevention experts and will share a process for this in the coming week. In the meantime, please contact Social Work at 236-818-1246 if you have any questions.

**Support available**

For further information and frequently asked questions about the outbreak, [please visit vch.ca/MinoruOutbreak](http://vch.ca/MinoruOutbreak). For families with outstanding questions, requiring emotional support or needing assistance navigating the healthcare system, please contact the PHC/VCH LTC Family Support Line at 1-844-824-2219 or 604-875-4953. Please note that the PHC/VCH LTC Family Support Line cannot provide specific resident status reports.

Sincerely,

Jo-Anne Kirk

Manager, Minoru Residence

**Frequently asked questions**

**Have any residents who tested positive fully recovered?**

A resident is considered recovered from COVID-19 once they are clear of symptoms and have returned to their baseline level of health. They are considered no longer infectious from COVID-19 20 days after their symptom onset. We do currently have some residents that have reached the period where they are no longer infectious. We will continue to monitor them and support their health needs until they return to their baseline level of health.

**As we are still in an active outbreak, can VCH be more active in pursuing the Ministry of Health to give us priority for the second dose?**

We are making all efforts to ensure that VCH receives timely allocation of doses, with long term care outbreaks being considered as the highest priority. Minoru was one of the first long term care homes within VCH to get first dose of the vaccine, so we will likely be one of the first to get the second dose as well. That being said, no one will receive their second dose before 35 days.

**Are there cohorts created to separate staff taking care of COVID positive vs negative residents?**

Staff are cohorted per unit. So staff working on 1 West for example, will continue only working on 1 West until the outbreak is declared over. When going from one resident who does not have COVID-19,
to a resident who is positive for COVID-19, all staff don new PPE between residents. All residents are also on droplet and contact precautions to reduce the risk of transmission.

**Why not just test every day?**
All of the residents at Minoru have been tested at least once—many of them more often than that. The COVID-19 nasal swab is an uncomfortable procedure so we only use this test when residents are symptomatic. All residents throughout the facility are also already on droplet and contact precaution. We do not wait for a positive test results to treat them as such. Every one throughout the home is treated as though they are positive.

We will of course test any resident who needs to be tested. But we also have limited lab capacity and unfortunately many outbreaks still remain around the province. If all the facilities were to conduct tests on every resident every day, our lab would not be able to have the turn-around on results that they do today. Daily testing would also take necessary care team members away from their work of caring for the needs of our residents.

**If everything is under control, why are more people getting infection? Are we past the peak?**
While we have implemented all of the outbreak measures and protocols, some residents may have been incubating the virus prior to some of these measures being implemented.

We believe the peak was somewhere around January 1 and that we are now coming down the other side of the curve. We are now seeing a slower amount of new cases coming in than we were before. We are also now two weeks past when we first began immunizations at Minoru, so residents will now be more protected against COVID-19 than they were two weeks ago. While we might still see some new cases over the coming weeks, we hope that symptoms will be milder and will hopefully have less severe outcomes.

**Can residents wear masks?**
Based on provincial health orders, residents in long-term care facilities are not required to wear masks while in their rooms as this is considered their home. Masks are required in communal areas, where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is higher. At this time, we are limiting the amount of time residents spend in these settings to further reduce this risk.

In addition, we know that COVID-19, is most often transmitted from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes and produce droplets. There is no reported evidence of airborne transmission. That being said, these are large droplets that are formed and visible to the naked eye. These droplets typically spread only one to two metres and are too large to float in the air (i.e. airborne) and quickly fall to the ground—limiting the risk of transmission of these droplets between residents sharing a room.